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HIC 2000G-001: Introduction to the Humanities: Interdisciplinary Problem-Solving

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HIC 2000G**Introduction to the Humanities: Interdisciplinary Problem-Solving****Time: Tuesdays 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.****Place: Coleman Hall 2140****Instructors:****Dr. Janet Marquardt****Email: jtmarquardt@eiu.edu****Office: DFAC 1343****Office Hours: Tues 5:00 pm****Mailbox: DFAC 2670****Dr. Charles Wharram****Email: ccwharram@eiu.edu****Office: Coleman 3010****Office Hours: MW 6-7:00 pm; T 4-6:00 pm****Mailbox: Coleman 3155**

HIC 2000G is an introduction to the practice and value of interdisciplinarity in the humanities. Students will use methods of interdisciplinary inquiry to examine a contemporary problem or controversial issue in the news, thereby exploring aspects of contemporary culture. Building upon the insights and methods of established disciplines, interdisciplinary inquiry is a creative striving toward new or alternative ways of seeing, understanding, and exploring the world of human culture.

For this class, we will be looking at the recent events involving Tyler Clementi, a college student at Rutgers University, who committed suicide after his dormitory roommate, Dharun Ravi, used a webcam to spy on Clementi while he was sexually engaged with another man and tweeted what he had seen. Ravi was subsequently arrested, charged, and tried for invasion of privacy.

We will review how the humanities have addressed various issues raised by this case in the past and then consider it within contemporary discourse.

Assessment

- 10% 1. Participation
- 10% 2. Reading quizzes/questions
- 40% 3. Weekly response papers
- 30% 4. Research project with proposal, documentation, and oral presentation
- 10% 5. Cumulative final examination (essay)

Participation:

You will be expected to come to each class, having read the assigned texts and prepared to ask questions and contribute comments to our class discussions. Since the class meets only once per week, you should make every effort to come to each class. Some of the readings are difficult. You should not feel as though you need to understand every text in its entirety. You should, however, prepare questions on those specific passages that you found difficult to understand. Although roll may be taken, students are counted as present for the purposes of grade assignment only when able to answer questions during classroom discussion sessions. Lectures will begin on time. Please do not enter the classroom if you arrive more than 5 minutes after the starting time; this constitutes an official absence. Blatant or repeated instances of disruption of class for any reason may result in grade reductions or referral of the students for disciplinary action. Contact us for permission to use any audio recording device in the classroom. Use the restroom before you come to class. No food or drink allowed in classroom.

Please do not disturb lectures by coming and going from classroom *except for emergencies*.

Weekly response papers:

Each week, you will complete a brief response (approx. 250 words) to that week's reading, to be submitted electronically the Saturday before our Tuesday class. You will complete a total of 12 response papers (none for weeks 1, 13, 15 and 16), of which the lowest two grades will be discarded ($10 \times 4\% = 40\%$).

Research project with proposal, documentation, and oral presentation

Early in the semester, you will choose a research topic related to the theme of the class to investigate. You will write up a brief proposal in order to help you organize your thoughts and provide you with a plan of action for completing the

project. On the last day of class, you will present your findings to the class. We will set up conferences with you to help you at each stage in the process.

Cumulative final examination (essay)

There will be a final examination, as scheduled by the university, on Tuesday, December 10 at 7:30 p.m.

Texts

Course e-reader (see items under each week's assignments), available on D2L.

Augsburg, Tanya. *Becoming Interdisciplinary: An Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies, 2nd Edition*. Kendall Hunt, 2010.

Brummett, Barry. *Techniques of Close Reading*. Sage, 2010.

Shakespeare, William. *The Merchant of Venice*. 1596-98.

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. 1774.
(in EIU bookstore, supplemental aisle, for \$13.95)

Special Needs: If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Emergency Procedures: In case of fire alarm, medical emergency, or severe weather, follow instructions posted in room.

Electronics: No cell phone usage in classroom allowed; turn off or to vibrate—no usage unless all our phones vibrate at once, indicating an EIU emergency.

Academic Integrity: It is assumed that students will honor the tradition of academic honesty. Any instructor who discovers academic misconduct (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office (Student Standards). See the Academic Integrity section of the undergraduate or graduate on-line catalog for a fuller explanation of the process and sanctions.

Introduction to the Humanities: Interdisciplinary Problem-Solving

Unit I foregrounds the problem that this specific course addresses. You should keep this problem in mind while reading the historical texts that introduce humanities studies in Unit II. In this unit, we will introduce “the Humanities” as a field of study and provide a historical foundation for addressing “interdisciplinary problem-solving” during the final weeks of the semester. In order for you to gain exposure to the multiple disciplines of the humanities and their concomitant methods, Units II and III offers some guest speakers, each of whom will introduce his or her discipline to you, so that you will have a better understanding of the ways that the various departments in the humanities look at problems and produce knowledge. During Unit IV, you will be introduced to a central problem that you will then explore through various methodologies introduced in the preceding unit. In the process of working with this problem or challenge, you will experience how an interdisciplinary approach can be more fruitful than any one discipline alone.

UNIT I (Weeks 1-2)

Introducing the Problem, Introducing the Humanities

Week 1 (August 20): Reading

Ian Parker. “The Story of a Suicide: Two College Roommates, a Webcam, and a Tragedy.” *The New Yorker*. February 6, 2012. 37-51.

New York Times coverage of the suicide of Tyler Clementi after he was spied upon by his roommate, Dharun Ravi.

<http://castle.eiu.edu/lgbtqa/Coming%20Out.php>

AFTER CLASS ASSIGNMENT: SHORT WRITING PROJECT

Read about other situations where teenage bullying led to suicide (there have been a large number lately) and consider how they are similar or different to the Clementi/Ravi case.

Search terms: Carolina Picchio, Rehtaeh Parsons, Audrey Pott, Phoebe Prince, Eric Mohat, Hope Witsell, Shannon and Erin Gallagher, Brandon Bittner, Tyler Nichols, Angelina Green, Megan Taylor Meier, Aaron Schwartz, Teen Suicide Epidemic in Bachmann's District, Community Trying To Stop Teen Suicide Trend In St. Clair.

Week 2 (August 27): Viewing

The Lives of Others [*Das Leben der anderen*]. Dir. Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck. Germany 2006. Film.

AFTER CLASS WRITING PROMPT: What similarities do students see between the Clementi/Ravi situation and the situation in the film? What (humanistic) themes emerge from these similarities?

UNIT II (Weeks 3-7)

A Brief History of the Humanities, Reading Through the Ages

Readings put emphasis on sense of public and private identity, relationships, self-determination.

Week 3 (September 3) The Classical Heritage

The Greeks: Private Life and Politics, Individual and Community Readings

J. J. Pollitt, *Art and Experience in Classical Greece*, pp. 3-11

Herodotus, *The History* (c. 440 BCE), I.31, Story of Cleobis and Biton

Plato, *Symposium* (c.380 BCE), Pausanias' speech

Sappho, Poems/fragments (c.590 BCE), selections

Plato, *The Phaedo* (c. 360 BCE), Death of Socrates

M. Adler, *Aristotle's Ethics* (c.330 BCE): *The Theory of Happiness*

AFTER CLASS WRITING PROMPT: This week, we read various Classical perspectives on the relationship between the individual and the community, between the private and the public. Drawing on at least three of these readings, write a short response paper in which you apply these terms to the Clementi/Ravi story, as it is reported in *The New Yorker* and *The New York Times*. Your paper's thesis should be an arguable statement about the role the concepts of individual, community, private, and public play in the Clementi/Ravi story. Questions that might inspire your prewriting and planning include: Is it significant that these events happened in a university residence hall, among first-year students? Why or why not? In the reports, who is Dharun Ravi's community? Who is Tyler Clementi's? What does it mean to "come out" about one's sexuality? Is this a public or a private act? Can you compare attitudes about sexuality in our society to those of the Classical past? What is bullying, and how is bullying related to issues of privacy? In what ways are the internet and texting public spaces? In what ways are they private? In what way is death a public or a private act? Please note that your paper will not answer all these questions; they are just good starting points for thinking through the assignment.

Week 4 (September 10) The Roman and Medieval Heritage

Christian Morality, Romantic Love, New Media, and Student Culture Readings

(Guest Lecturer: Dr. Bailey Young, History)

Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions* (398 CE), excerpts

Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend* (13th century), excerpt: St. Thomas

James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (1922), excerpt: Taboos

"Carnal Erotic Love: the Troubadours" from Angel Flores, *An Anthology of Medieval Lyrics*,

Three poems: Gaucelm Faidit, "A knight was with his lady fondly lying..."; Beatriz

de Dia, "I dwell in deep anxiety..."; and William IX, Count of Poitiers,

"Under the sun I ride along..."

"The 'Ganymede' Gay Subculture" and "Ganymede and Helen" (12th century) from: J. Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*

Carmina Burana (11-13th centuries), selections

St. Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) & St. Aelred of Rivaux (1110-67), selections from Boswell

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), "Antiphon for the Virgin"

The Hammer of Witches (1486), selections

Preparation for Week 5: Viewing

Opening 30 minutes of *The Merchant of Venice*. Dir. Michael Radford. U.K. 2004. Film.

AFTER CLASS WRITING PROMPT: This week our readings addressed the Christian influence on notions of chastity, monogamy, homosexuality, strangers, taboos and transgression (sin). Write a short response paper that discusses how fear and faith might influence individual values, actions, attitudes towards others. Think about the importance of doubt in forming both fear and faith and at what point fear becomes irrational and faith changes to fanaticism. Consider the social communities that ethnicity and religions form and how that might nuance perceptions of Self and Other. Can you apply any of this to the Clementi/Ravi situation?

Week 5 (September 17) The Renaissance Heritage

The Human Spirit and Justice Readings

(Guest Lecturer: Dr. Julie Campbell, English)

Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* (1594)

AFTER CLASS WRITING PROMPT: This week, we read Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and analyzed Michael Radford's 2004 film. Drawing on these texts, write a short response paper in which you apply these terms to the Clementi/Ravi story, as it is reported in *The New Yorker* and *The New York Times*. Your paper's thesis should be an arguable statement about what this story can teach us about the value of the human spirit. Questions that might inspire your prewriting and planning include: What is the value of humanity, in general? Of the individual human? In what ways does our valuing of humanity shape our daily lives? What challenges our valuing of humanity? What role does trust play in our daily lives? What is the relationship between unfairness and trust? What is the responsibility of the bystander in a case of unfairness? Please note that your paper will not answer all these questions; they are just good starting points for thinking through the assignment.

Week 6 (September 24) Enlightenment versus Romanticism

A) Enlightenment Readings: Of Certainty & the Scientific Method

Seneca, from *Epistles* (64 CE)

Bacon, from *Essays* (1597)

Descartes, from *A Discourse on Method* (1637)

Locke, from *Two Treatises on Government*, "Of Slavery" & "Of Property" (1689)

Hume, "On Suicide" (1755)

B) Romantic Readings: Revolution, Sensibility, & Democracy

Rousseau, from *The Social Contract* (1762)

Wollstonecraft, from *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792)

The Declaration of Independence (1776)

Novalis, "Monologue" (1798)

Staël, from "The Spirit of Translations" (1813)

AFTER CLASS WRITING PROMPT: This week, we read various Enlightenment and Romantic perspectives on the relationship between the individual and the government, between Reason and its alternatives (feeling, the aesthetic), and between a community (a "state," a "society," and/or a "culture") and that which exists outside the community (the "foreign"). Drawing on at least three of these readings, write a short response paper in which you apply these terms to the Clementi/Ravi story, as it is reported in *The New Yorker* and *The New York Times*. Your paper's thesis should be an arguable statement about the role these concepts play in the Clementi/Ravi story. Questions that might inspire your prewriting and planning include: What constitutes "property" (Locke) or the "social contract" (Rousseau) in the story? Is Dharun Ravi the foreigner or is Tyler Clementi? What is the responsibility of the community in relation to the foreigner? Is this a story best approached by the tools of reason, or through the lens of feeling? What is the role of the government in protecting the rights of the individual (or the foreigner), even in the face of a "general will" suspicious of these rights? Please note that your paper will not answer all these questions; they are just good starting points for thinking through the assignment.

Week 7 (October 1)

A New Sense of Feeling & Suicidal Tendencies

Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774)

(This text, central to the cult of suicide in the Romantic Era, addresses the longer history of concern about “self-murder” in humanities studies.)

Charlotte Salomon (1917-43), *Leben ? oder Theater ? Ein Singspiel*, selections from G. Pollock article.

Browse through manuscript here: <http://www.jhm.nl/collection/specials/charlotte-salomon>

AFTER CLASS WRITING PROMPT: This week, we read Goethe’s *Werther*, a novel that directly addresses the question of suicide. Drawing on Goethe’s novel, write a short response paper in which you address the Clementi/Ravi story, as it is reported in *The New Yorker* and *The New York Times*. Your paper’s thesis should be an arguable statement about what lessons can be drawn from *Werther* regarding the Clementi/Ravi story. How does *Werther*’s suicide differ from Clementi’s? What are the parallels? Can Goethe’s novel be read as a defense of suicide? Can Clementi’s? Or is it a gross misunderstanding of *Werther*’s actions, and Clementi’s, to read their actions in this way? Is suicide ultimately an individual choice, or is it a response determined by the values and actions of a community? You may choose to link some of the earlier texts we have studied in this class to the question of the concept of the “noble death.”

Week 8 (October 8)

Humanistic Perspectives on the Problem at Hand: Identity Politics

- A) Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege and Male Privilege” (defines privilege)
Michael Kimmel, “Masculinity as Homophobia”
bell hooks, from *Where We Stand: Class Matters*, chapters 2 (“Coming to Class Consciousness”) and 13 (“Crossing Class Boundaries”).
Yamato, Gloria. “Racism: Something about the Subject Makes It Hard to Name” (five different modes of racism/oppression in U.S. society)
- B) Michel Foucault, from *Discipline and Punish*, selection from “Panopticism” (theoretical frame)
Joshua Gamson, “Reflections on Queer Theory and Communication”
Mary Gray, “It Doesn’t Get Better for Anyone if We Don’t Make It Better for Everyone” (essay on homophobia, the internet, and youth suicide)

AFTER CLASS WRITING PROMPT: This week, we read various contemporary analyses of identity and how identity is shaped by our relationships with others and by how others see us (or how we think they see us). Drawing on Foucault’s concept of the internalized panopticon and on at least two other of these readings, write a short response paper in which you analyze the various ways identity and how (we think) others see us are a part of the Clementi/Ravi story, as it is reported in *The New Yorker* and *The New York Times*. Your paper’s thesis should be an arguable statement that addresses more than one aspect of identity; be sure to consider nationality, socioeconomic status, education, age, and other aspects of identity in addition to sexuality, as you plan your paper.

UNIT III (Week 9-12) Methods of the Disciplines of the Humanities

Week 9 (October 15)

Brummett, “Preface” and “On Noticing What You See and Hear” and “Theories, Methods, Techniques” (to p. 48 in the book)

Guests: Dr. Eydt-Beebe from **Foreign Languages** (basic textual analysis) and faculty member from **Philosophy** (logic).

AFTER CLASS: Prepare a short paper applying one of these methods to the Clementi/Ravi case.

Week 10 (October 22)

Guests: Dr. Gronnvoll from **Communication Studies** (rhetoric) and Ms. Whisler from the **Library** (research methods)

AFTER CLASS: Prepare a short paper applying one of these methods to the Clementi/Ravi case.

Week 11 (October 29)

Brummett, "Transformations in Texts: Seeing beneath the Surface" (pp. 49-96) *Historical Methods*: using archives and primary documents
Guest speakers Dr. Newton Key from **History** (archival research, primary documents) and Dr. Chris Mitchell from **Theatre Arts** (performativity)

AFTER CLASS: Prepare a short paper applying one of these methods to the Clementi/Ravi case.

Week 12 (November 5)

Brummett, "Ideology and Argument" and "Conclusion: A Close Reading Using Multiple Techniques" (pp. 97-130)
Dr. Marquardt will discuss the methods of **Art History** (visual image analysis; integrative analysis using historical and visual image analysis simultaneously)

AFTER CLASS: Prepare a short paper producing a "multiple techniques" reading of the Clementi/Ravi case, modeled on Brummett's conclusion

UNIT IV (Weeks 13-16) Interdisciplinary Problem-Solving (IPS)

Week 13 (November 12)

Augsburg, "What Are interdisciplinary Studies?" "Essential Terms for Interdisciplinary Studies," and "Describing Interdisciplinary Studies: The Power of Metaphors" from *Becoming Interdisciplinary: An Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies*.

Discussion: what is the difference between "multiple techniques" and interdisciplinarity?

Week 14 (November 19)

Reports on the outcome of the Dharun Ravi trial
Melanie Burney, "Standing up to Bullies." *Chronicle of Higher Education* 03/16/2012 (Convergence Supplement): 50-53.

Discussion: in what ways are the humanistic concepts of individual/community, public/private, and spirit/matter reflected in the legal system's response to this and similar cases?

Film Viewing

AFTER CLASS Response paper (due Saturday, November 23): Interdisciplinary analysis of the film, drawing on at least two humanities methods (from weeks 9-12) and at least three themes/concepts (from weeks 3-8).

Week 15 (Thanksgiving Break)

Week 16 (December 3)

Student presentations and discussions of research projects.

Final Exam (Tuesday, December 10, 7:30 p.m.)